

Solihull Drinker

Issue No: 62

Winter 2012

You drank us Dry!!



The 2012 Solihull & District beer festival was again an outstanding success, with nearly 650 visitors over the two days that it ran, and selling out of all our real ales, ciders and perry by 9.30pm on Saturday evening. Held yet again at the Royal British Legion in Union Road, and kindly sponsored by new brewery Whitworth Brewing Co from Shirley,

the aim was, as always, to offer a great selection of real ales, most of which could not be found in the Solihull area. People came from far and wide across the Midlands, and some even farther away than that—Jeff Salmon of New York popped in on his way home to try out the beers, pronouncing himself very satisfied with the maltier ones.

Friday evening was very busy, with the majority of the visitors coming in. This of course is partly because at 5.30pm on the Friday the best choice of real ales is on offer. Beer-wise there was



Jeff enjoys his beer.

something for everyone, from golden ales to milds, stouts and strong beers. The first 3 beers to run out were Dark Star American Pale Ale at 9.55pm on Friday; then Whitworth Sobriety and Sobriety Blonde, also on Friday night; and thirdly Silhill Yankee at 3.30pm on the Saturday.



Friday night at its busiest

Saturday lunchtime saw the festival at its quietest, with a gentle influx of people. Our Homebrew competition ran for the 3rd year, this time attracting 10 entries. The winner was Andrew Heath of Birmingham with his tippie Blonde; second was Stuart

Robinson with his Commodore Ale, and third was Trevor Howarth with Roast Chestnut. The standard was very high and judging had to go to a taste-off for the eventual winner.

Jonny Palmer from Birmingham University chose to spend his 21st birthday with about 30 friends propping up the bar—quite literally, as they had come in costume as OAPs.



The Homebrew crowd

(Continued on page 3)

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(2012 Beer Festival—continued)

Many of them stayed on into the evening and enjoyed the entertainment as well as the beers (now we know who to blame for the ales running out!).



Jonny (centre) and friends



We were blessed with good weather so many people chose to drink outside on the Legion's terrace in the calm sunshine.



Saturday 5.00pm saw the Warwick Uni Brass Band perform a selection of musical interludes, and the fun continued apace into the evening, with small queues forming at the door, but real ales still on at that point everyone was happy.



Thirsty visitors queue up



The Strumtroopers followed at 8.30pm, a hit last year with their unique take on song covers from the 1950s to the 2000s, armed only with ukuleles, guitar and percussion.

The beer started to dwindle along with the cider and perry and was all gone by 9.30pm; but luckily the Royal British Legion had its own supply of real ales which lasted somewhat longer.

The Strumtroopers shake it up

This year we held a 'Guess the Mystery Beer' competition, which was won by Richard Busz, banqueting manager at the Motorcycle Museum, whose prize for guessing St Austell's Proper Job was a 4-pint carry-out from Bernies Off-Licence.



'Relax, it's all over for another year!' Organiser Kevin Clarke (right) and brother Gordon.

Kind donations of unused beer tokens raised the sum of £247.50 for our chosen charity, the Stratford upon Avon Shakespeare's Hospice; supplemented by the sale of books donated by Ann Corfield, wife of the late John Corfield, a local CAMRA member.



It only remains to thank the Royal British Legion for their hospitality, our sponsors the Whitworth Brewing Co for their sponsorship, the CAMRA members who gave up time to help and serve at the festival; and all of you for coming along and helping make our festival the success it was. Same time next year!!!



The Solihull Drinker is the quarterly newsletter of the Solihull & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

Contributions, comments and enquiries should be sent to Julia Hammonds, The Editor, Solihull Drinker, c/o 4 Kendrick Close, Solihull B92 0QD or email julia.hammonds@blueyonder.co.uk

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten any items in the Solihull Drinker, but will always honour the spirit of the contribution.

Printed by Thistle Print Ltd, Leeds.

Solihull CAMRA 2012 ©

Hail to the Ale!

The Boat Inn, Catherine de Barnes

It is all change at the Boat: managers Chris and Claire left a while ago for pastures new and Dave has left to take over the Four Oaks near Sutton Coldfield. The new manager, Paul, has now settled in. Drinks-wise, the experiment with cask cider has finished: it did not sell very well and the pub is now back to three real ales, currently Wychwood Hobgoblin, Purity Pure UBU (both guests) and regular offering Wells Bombardier.



The White Lion, Hampton in Arden

The White Lion now has 6 real ales on at all times: M & B Brew XI (3.6%); Hobsons Best Bitter (3.8%); Sharp's Doom Bar (4.0%); Jennings Cumberland Ale (4.0%); Banks's Sunbeam (4.2%) and Wychwood Hobgoblin (4.5%); and with the log fire burning, is an excellent place to pass a pleasant time during this winter weather.

The Vaults, Knowle

The Vaults is gearing up for the festive season with forthcoming events, starting with their famed Pickled Onion competition on 7th December and new Gingerbread House competition on 23rd December. On New Year's Eve there is a 'Rat Pack' theme night, with a DJ playing contemporary songs, Rat Pack decorations, buffet and late bar—ticket only, £12.00 per head, book in advance (over-18's only). Contact the pub for further details.

The Bell, Tanworth-in-Arden

The Bell has recently undergone a major refurbishment, now restyled both inside and out with a 'new country' theme: essentially an update on the archetypal English pub. The aim was to create a relaxed and comfortable space to enjoy coffee and drinks as well as lunch or dinner with friends, but overall to meet the needs of all its customers. There were 3 real ales on at the time of writing: Timothy Taylor Landlord, Purity Mad Goose and Greene King IPA.



The Red Lion, Knowle

The Red Lion continues to offer a good selection of real ales, with Purity Mad Goose and Moor Revival having been spotted there in recent weeks. Ember Inns also have a seasonal programme coming up which should offer more choice over the festive period.

The Cock Horse, Rowington

We understand that the Cock Horse, although not yet sold by Punch Taverns, has finally shut its doors for good; therefore a real ale loss to the branch.

- Local Beer, Pub, Club & Brewery news

The Strawberry Fields Bar, Shirley

Now under the management of Craig and Sandra, and with three rotating real ales on at any time plus Weston's Original cider (6%). Recent ales on offer have included Wychwood Hobgoblin, Thwaites Lancaster Bomber and St Austell Tribute.

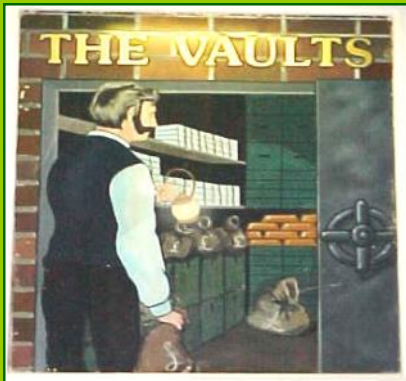


The Warwickshire Lad

At the time of visiting, this friendly and welcoming pub had on offer Whitworth Brewing Co's Sobriety Blonde (3.6%), 'The Lad', a dark toffee 4.3% (brewed specially for them by Whitworth); Brains' Reverend James (4.5%) and St Austell Tribute (4.2%).

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Coming soon: Pickled Onion competition; Gingerbread House competition, and Rat Pack theme night—see page 4 opposite for further details.

The Vaults, St John's Close, Knowle. Tel: 01564 773656
Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 12.00-2.30pm and 5.00-11.30pm;
Fri & Sat: 12.00-11.30pm; Sun 12.00-11.00pm.

Pub of the Year Award 2012

The Bulls' Head at Barston won our branch's Pub of the Year Award 2012 earlier this year. This makes the 7th win for the pub since the branch began these awards. The pub is a friendly and inviting place, both for regulars and the occasional visitor, and always has a minimum of 3 well-kept ales on at all times.

Carl Wright, branch chairman, presented the award certificate to landlord Martin 'Brad' Bradley, amongst a gathering of branch members and pub regulars; and we are sure that it will soon be gracing the walls of the pub along with the other 6 certificates the pub has won over the years.



Carl Wright, CAMRA branch Chairman, presents Brad with the POTY award.

Lapworth Scarecrow Festival

Carol and I popped down to the Lapworth Scarecrow Festival for the first time this year in September, now in its seventh year. I especially wanted to check out their first ever beer festival, being run from a small marquee next to the village hall. Don't get me wrong, I definitely enjoyed strolling round the village looking at the ingenuity of the scarecrows. This year's theme was "Best of British - who made Britain great" and entries varied from queens, knights, Jamie Oliver, Paddington Bear, through to a good selection of British Olympians with no less than 3 Bradley Wiggins !

But back to the beer. The organisers had very cleverly arranged sponsors for each of the beers, and had sensibly kept themselves down to 10 beers to see how things went. What was definitely interesting was that they had not gone down the traditional road that some do when first staging a beer festival - stick to well known real ales. No, they had gone for the unusual and less well known and congratulations on them for doing so. When I was there on the Sunday, some ales had already run out; there was a steady flow of customers and it was easy to see why.

The ales included XT's (Oxfordshire I think) XT4, a 3.6% amber and XT6, a 4.5% rich ruby, which was in a French oak cask. They also had Raw (Derbyshire) Dark Peat Stout at 4.5% and Raw Edge Pale at 4.4%; Tring (Hertfordshire) Jack O'Legs at 4.2%; Rebellion (Buckinghamshire) Blonde at 4%; Blue Bee (Sheffield) Tangled Up at 6%; Moonshine (Cambridge) Harvest Moon mild at 3.8% and Sperrin Brewery (Nuneaton) Head Hunter at 3.8%.



As I said, an interesting and unusual selection. As far as I am aware the festival went well overall and the ales did seem to be going down well too, so it is to be hoped that next year's Lapworth Scarecrow Festival includes their second real ale festival. I for one will definitely pay it another visit and would recommend others to do so too.

Ray Cooke

Whitworth Brewing Co



Since officially opening back in April, the Whitworth Brewing Co. have gone from strength to strength. The brewery launched with one brew, Sobriety (4%), gloriously golden with a creamy white crown, a cascade of floral hops combined with sweet toffee notes, providing a full-bodied beer with citrus flavours and a long-lasting finish. This ale is still a hit across the Midlands and one of the first beers to sell out at our festival. They then progressed to Sobriety Blonde (3.6%), a refreshing quaffable beer with tangerine notes and masses of the finest American hops.

They are now brewing a beer especially for the Warwickshire Lad at Woodend, 'The Lad', which is proving very popular. Also available are new Snowbriety (3.9%), a roasted chestnut winter beer with warm toffee and roasted malt notes, hopped with the finest traditional English hops (until March 2013); and Sobriety MPH (3.7%), to be available all year round, an original ale with a nod to the traditional brown beer. Roast malt notes make this a refreshing mid to dark-brown mild.

Charlotte Whitworth, co-owner of the brewery with husband Steve, said "Our proudest moment since we launched has been the sponsorship of the Solihull & District CAMRA beer festival; and we want to continue to be a part of this event in the future."

The branch is certainly as proud of this fledgling company, and we continue to wish Whitworth great success in the future with their enterprise.



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At last—our 400th branch member!

We have been waiting for 3 years for the 400th member to join Solihull and District CAMRA and are only surprised that it has taken until now, given the kind and generous offer of a gallon of ale from the town centre's JD Wetherspoons' White Swan for said person.

Finally that day arrived, and the lucky chap was Robert Vaughan. A presentation of a certificate to mark the occasion was handed over by the branch's Membership Officer Bob Jackson, and JD Wetherspoons' Kira presented Robert with vouchers for his gallon of beer.

Bob Jackson said "I can remember when the membership was less than 100 and it has grown because CAMRA can be seen to be a worthy organisation acting on behalf of real ale drinkers to increase availability of real ale in our pubs and also to curb excessive tax increases"



L-R: Kira, Robert and Bob

Solihull & District CAMRA congratulates Robert for his foresight on joining the branch and wishes him well with his membership—we hope to see him at meetings and socials in the future. As at the time of going to press, we now have 437 members, so the count is creeping steadily upwards.

Watch this magazine for the next beery prize for the 500th member to join the branch!!!

Membership Matters

The most notable event this year has been the attaining of our 400th member. The membership had hovered just below 400 for a couple of years and the branch had been looking forward to a presentation at our beer festival. Too late for our festival, but it finally happened and a presentation was made to Robert Vaughan at the White Swan, Solihull, where Wetherspoons' Kira presented him with vouchers for one gallon of ale.

Quite surprisingly the membership has risen dramatically since then and at the time of writing is 437. Why not join yourself, you never know, you might win something too!

Bob Jackson, Membership Secretary

Stuck for a Christmas present??

CAMRA has a great selection for beer drinkers: the 2013 Good Beer Guide is invaluable on trips out; their 101 Beer Days Out would also come in useful, and Great British Pubs is worth dipping into over a pint or two. Beer-related clothing (T-shirts, polo shirts and sweaters) is also available. Or why not buy someone a CAMRA membership package? - £25 gets them a year's membership for 1, a copy of the Good Beer Guide, and other materials. See <https://shop.camra.org.uk/> for further information and prices.

The 63rd edition of the Solihull Drinker will be published on Monday 4th March, 2013.

Copy deadline for advertising and contributions will be Sunday 17th February, 2013.

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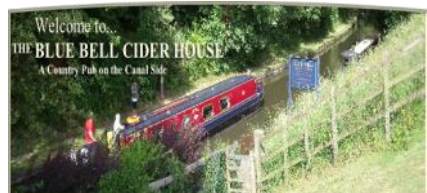
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25 years at the Helm

Martin ('Brad') and Joy Bradley have just clocked up their 25th year of managing the Bulls' Head pub in Barston, an event which was celebrated with a private party at the end of September.

Brad first entered the licensing trade back in 1965, taking on what was then the Wayfarer in Hockley Heath (now the Miller & Carter). He then went on to do relief management for M & B for 47 years, including a spell at the Wilsons' Arms in Knowle, leaving in 1987 to take on the stewardship of the Bulls' Head.

The Bulls' Head has remained at heart a traditional country pub: a very reassuring thing when so many pubs across the country close for massive refurbishments which leave them totally unlike their former selves (or, of course, even close for good in some cases). Not so at the Bulls' Head: here you can expect a warm and friendly welcome extended to regulars and occasional visitors alike. The emphasis is on excellently-kept real ales, good home-cooked seasonal food and a comfortable ambience occasioned by the cheery log fires in the bars in winter and the beer garden acting as another room in summer.

The pub is at the heart of the village, and comes to the fore each August Bank Holiday Monday when the village fete is held in the fields next door. This is a very busy day for the pub, when hundreds of visitors stop for a drink or food. Another tradition is the annual New Year's Eve celebrations, when the pub jumps to modern day with a disco to entertain its guests.

Brad said "Joy and myself still enjoy our jobs, and we appreciate the support of CAMRA over the years. We hope to be custodians of the Bulls' Head for many years to come".



CAMRA is organising a Save Your Pint mass lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 12th December as part of the scrap the beer duty escalator campaign.

Go to www.saveyourpintlobby.co.uk for more details and to register to attend

Christmas Photo Session

Solve one of your Christmas present problems - what to get for mum and dad. Or if you are "mum and dad" suggest it to the children! - a high street studio-style photo session for all the family - with prices you won't find in any High Street studio.

The last session for 2012 will be on Sunday 9th December, with delivery guaranteed for Christmas. 10% of all sales will be donated to The Lady Taverners:- a charity supporting disabled children.



Phone Steve on 07962-161263 for prices and to make a booking.

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Saturday evening events a speciality: phone the Club for details of who's on.

Christmas and New Year opening:

Christmas Eve: 2pm—12 midnight, featuring the Christmas Eve raffle draw.

Christmas Day: 12 midday—2pm. Boxing Day: 12 midday—8pm.

Wednesday 27th—Saturday 30th December: 2pm—11pm.

New Year's Eve: 2pm—1am (children welcome but only up until 9pm):

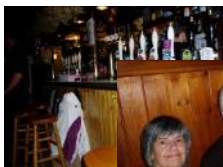
Disco Picnic—recycle your Christmas leftovers and bring your own picnic to the Club!! Entry free to Club members; £20 to non-members (limited tickets available so ring to book without delay).

HAPPY CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR TO ALL FROM THE COMMITTEE!!

A Cambridge Weekend Away

Cambridge, like Oxford, is known for its universities, however when Solihull CAMRA visited for their weekend away in November we plumped for its hostelrys. As per usual the weekend started on Thursday and our intrepid leader Ray had sorted a pub crawl close to our B&B, so within 5 minutes we were entering the doors of the GBG Salisbury Arms. A quick peruse of the beer range saw Arkell's Wiltshire Gold; St. Austell Tribute; Adnam's Bitter and Broadside; Young's Winter Warmer and Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier: a most unimaginative range in a pub with a comfortably "lived in" character.

The next venue was a cracking pub, the Live and Let Live, with plenty of atmosphere and a fine display of handpumps decking the bar. Only five beers were on at the time of our visit: Nethergate Umbel Ale; Tring Death or Glory; Island Wight Gold; Rother Valley Choc Porter and Meantime Keller Beer, brewed for Oakham Brewery. I tried the last two beers, perfectly OK but they were not really to my taste. The next pub of the evening was the Kingston Arms, a one roomed pub



Allan & Brenda in the Kingston Arms

with wooden panelling and buzzing with people. We managed to get a seat in the corner then ambled up to the board to see the offerings. 10 hand-pumps advertised Northumberland Firkin Freezing; Hoggley's Northants Bitter; Hammerpot Bottle Wreck Porter; Rudgate Ruby Mild; Timothy Taylor Landlord; Thornbridge Jaipur; Woodforde Wherry; Hop Back Summer Lightning; Crouch Vale Brewers Gold and Castle Rock Preservation Ale. Some of these beers were closer to my taste. So ended our first evening, everyone content to retire to bed to be up for the long day ahead of us.

Steve Dyson

Friday arrived, and the plan was to visit a selection of pubs around the western side of the city centre. We arranged to meet at the Sir Isaac Newton, toward the top end of Castle Street at midday, which allowed us all to go exploring the centre. Though the Sir Isaac Newton is a Greene King pub there was only IPA on; but the landlord is able to bring in guests, albeit from the GK guest ales list, and so had Timothy Taylor Landlord, Brains Merlin's Oak (4.3%), and Howells (a Lothian brewery) Howell at the Moon (4.0%). I tried the latter two ales which were both in good condition and enjoyable. The next pub was just down the hill in Castle Street and as you walk there you can see the remnants of what was the castle on your left hand side, next to the County Council offices (all that is now left are the earth-



The Sir Isaac Newton

works of the original motte): Everards The County Arms where the usual range of Everards offerings – Tiger, Beacon and Original - were available. I think we all opted for Castle Rock's Harlequin (4.0%) which was in good condition. The Castle Inn (not to be confused with the Castle which is on the other side of the centre) is on the other side of the road to the County Arms so we had another 'long walk' to get there. This was a much busier pub; it is Adnam's most westerly pub and had a wide range of their beers on, including Southwold Bitter, Broadside, Lighthouse,



The County Arms

Explorer, and Ghost Ship. It also had Green Jack Brewing Co's Hop Harvest Wheaten Ale (4.0%) and Grain Oak (from Norfolk) (3.8%).



From there we walked down the road and into Magdalen Street and the Pickerel Inn (usually just known as the Pickerel). There is debate about the name but it's likely based on 'Pike and Eel' – it is next to the river after all. This pub is directly opposite Magdalen college and claims to be the oldest pub in Cambridge. It's certainly an

(Continued overleaf)



The Pickerel

interesting building with atmosphere; also one that offers a discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. The Pickerel is a member of the Taylor Walker pubco chain and had Theakstons Old Peculiar, Woodforde's Wherry (3.8%), Woodforde's Nelson's Revenge (4.5%), and Potbelly (Kettering) Yeller Belly (5.2%). Across the river and into Bridge Street to the Baron of Beef and the Mitre, adjacent to one another. The Baron of Beef is yet another GK pub – they are very common in Cambridge. There was therefore a little debate as to

whether to stop for a drink or not. However, this was the first of their pubs where we'd seen their 1799 porter (4.5%) so we stopped for a quick one. I found it to be fine but not the best when compared to other porters this weekend. They also had Abbott, IPA, Olde Trip and Rudgate Jorvik Blonde (3.8%). By now some of the party were getting pretty hungry, so food was ordered. Oh well, thought I, so ordered a sticky toffee pudding—goes pretty well with porter. So to the Mitre, which is part of the Nicholson's chain where they had 8 real ales on – Vicious American Wheat IPA (5%), Liverpool Brewery Organic 24 Carat Gold (4.2%), Hopdaemon Incubus (4.0%), Wharfebank Brewery (Yorkshire) Verbeia Pale Ale (3.6%), Bateman's Autumn Fall (4.2%), Oxfordshire Ales Pride of Oxford (4.2%), Bath Ales Gem (4.1%) and Nicholson's Pale Ale (4.0%). Of today's pubs this was equal first in terms of the range and quality of ales on offer. The other top pub of



The Mitre & the Baron of Beef

the day came next. There is what might be described as an alley near to these pubs. As you walk down it, you suddenly come across the Maypole, run by the same Italian family for over 30 years



The Maypole

now, with 8 real ales on – Cottage Brewing Norman's Conquest (7.0%) (most expensive pint of the weekend at £4.50), Newby Wyke Brewery's (near Grantham) Banquo (3.8%), Fellows Brewery (pump clip says Cambridge, but wasn't aware of this micro) Pepys' Ink (4.5%), Milton Brewery's Nero (5.0%) and Areona (5.7%) (second most expensive of the weekend at £4.00 a pint), Oldershaw Beers (Lincolnshire) Mellowdaze (4.5%), and Buntingford Brewery's Highwayman (3.6%) and Aramis (4.0%). We then walked to the Eagle, one of Cambridge's more famous hostelrys. Yes, it's a fascinating old building, with bits of original wall exposed behind glass

panels, but it's famous for two main reasons: Watson and Crick of DNA fame used to eat and drink in here on a regular basis and it is reputed that they announced their discovery here too; and in the back bar there are signatures and names of WW II pilots on the ceiling, signed using candle smoke. This place was busy and unfortunately it only had GK beers, though a particularly good range of them – IPA, IPA Gold, Abbott, Abbott Reserve, Olde Trip, Old Speckled Hen, and their own Eagle DNA.

From here it was a short walk down to Silver Street where the Anchor sits next to the river, and down a short alley next to it to the Mill in Mill Street and also next to the river. As the GBG suggests you can find Cambridge Moonshine beers in the Mill, we started here. Unfortunately there weren't any on, though there was a 6 beer range on. Grain's Blonde Ash (cloudy Belgian style wheat beer), Adnams Ghost Ship (4.5%) and Explorer (5.0%), Nethergate Umbel Magna (5.0%) (a coriander flavoured porter), Deuchars IPA, and Potbelly Brewery Pigs Do Fly (4.4%).



The Mill

Despite the selection here it was a disappointing visit and we moved on quickly, so we walked back up the alley to the Anchor – yes, another Greene King pub. Part of the pub had been reserved for a private function so the rest of it was pretty rammed. Apart from the Gangly Ghoul there was nothing of interest on offer after all the other Greene King beers we'd been offered. So we moved onto the Panton Arms in Panton Street, back towards the B&B. We understood they did reasonable food and it had been described as a quiet place. It was far from quiet – indeed it was rammed with



The Anchor

people but we were by now hungry so persevered and found a table. They had GK IPA and Abbott

Reserve (6.5%), and guests Brains Merlin's Oak and Howells Howell at the Moon. From here we headed back toward the B&B. The others headed off to the Devonshire Arms, as we'd missed out on it the evening before. It had been an interesting and enjoyable day but I was looking forward to our trip to Bury St Edmunds tomorrow.

Ray Cooke

Saturday morning saw us take the train to Bury St Edmunds for our first and only brewery visit, arriving at the Old Cannon Brewery just before noon where we received a warm welcome from the staff and started with a 1/3 tray containing the 3 Old Cannon beers available that day – Best Bitter, Gunner's Daughter and Gunport Stout. We then met the owner, Garry Clark who took us on a detailed tour of the brewery and even gave us a bit of a history lesson (there was a brewery in the adjoining building going back to 1847. When bought by Greene King in 1917, the brewery closed, not to reopen until Old Cannon took over in 1999). The mash tun and kettle were situated in the main bar so drinkers and diners get to experience the smell of brewing at close quarters. The rest of the brewing kit was down in the cellar along with the casks of ale on sale in the bar. On November 22nd which is St Edmund's Day, a special brew called St Edmund's Head is produced: this is a 5% brew best described as liquid fruitcake. Another unique feature of Old Cannon is the "spirit" they produce. A sample of Gunner's Daughter is sent away to a distiller to be distilled into spirit. It is then returned to the brewery, bottled and sold with a strength warning. Adnams and GK do a similar thing so it must be an East Anglian tradition.

We moved onto the Rose & Crown where we sampled GK Mild, IPA, 1799 Porter & Abbott; then to the Dove which lived up to its reputation, delivering 6 ales on handpump and 2 more from the cellar. Best of the day was Wolf Poppy Ale (with 20p per pint donated to the British Legion). We then called in at the Nutshell, another GK pub selling IPA & Abbott which claims to be Britain's smallest pub: the 6 of us nearly filled the place so I would not dispute their claim. Our final port of call in Bury was the Brewhouse, home of Brewshed Brewery. From their own stable, 2 Porters, a Pale Ale & a Best Bitter were on the bar alongside 4 interesting guest ales. The vanilla porter was excellent if you like that combination. We then had a quick look at the brewhouse at the back but it was closed up.—the brewer had been summoned to a SIBA meeting at the last minute.



Ray & Allan in the Nutshell

Allan Duffy

After a quick brush up at the B&B we hit few more pubs: the Champion of the Thames with Timothy Taylor Landlord and GK IPA was uninspiring; the St. Radigund: a compact pub with a comfortable ambience and 8 beers: Milton Minotaur Mild; Milton Saturnalia and Tiki; Shepherd Neame Spitfire; Fuller's London Pride; Woodforde Nelson's Revenge; Studland Bay Wrecker and Oakham Inferno; then the Free Press, a GK pub with their IPA; 1799 and the seasonal Fireside; Titanic Red Ensign; Brains Merlin Oak; Howell's Howell at the Moon and Cambridge Farmers. Not too far away was the Elm Tree, a large comfortable pub though rather dark inside due to an electrical fault; this however gave it some atmosphere to compliment its 9 beers: Banks and Taylor's Shefford Bitter and Dark Mild; Crouch Vale Bravo; Growler Hound Dog; White Horse Black Porter; Buntingford Twitchwell; Courage Best and Wells Golden Cauldron. Moving on we reached the Geldart: from the outside a traditional street corner local, but inside really a restaurant with a real ale bar attached, with Deuchar's IPA; Young's Special; Bateman's Autumn Fall; Exmoor Gold; Dartmoor Legend and Magpie Drop of Gold. Finally, our last pub and one of the gems of the city, the Cambridge Blue. A busy pub, the bar goes on for miles and has a heated tent leading to a small outside drinking area, with beers served from handpumps and casks kept in a cooled room just off the bar. Arkwright's Hells Bells; Cottage Hops and Glory; Woodforde Mardlers and Wherry; Burton Bridge Bramble Stout Gurdon Gyle 0052 (?); Oakham Black Hole Porter; Poacher's Jock Trap; Acorn Barnsley Bitter and Nelson Pieces of Eight were on offer. That completed our tour of Cambridge, a city with numerous fine pubs, many of which we had not enough time to visit.—still, there's always a next time!



The Cambridge Blue

Steve Dyson

Dates For Your Diary

Branch Meetings

(Branch meetings start at 8.30pm except where noted otherwise)

Monday 7th January 2013	Vaults, Knowle
Monday 4th February 2013	The Warwick, Hockley Heath (formerly the Oak and the ORO)
Monday 4th March 2013	Strawberry Fields Bar, Shirley

Committee Meetings

Monday 21st January 2013	West Warwickshire Sports Club, 78 Grange Road, B91 1DA
Monday 18th March	Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club, Station Road, Knowle

(8.30pm start. Ordinary members may attend Committee meetings but may only participate if invited to do so by the Committee)

Socials

Saturday 18th December	Christmas pub-crawl: meet @ The Masons Arms, Solihull at 8.00pm.
Friday 18th January 2013	Kenilworth Crawl: meet Solihull Station @ 7.00pm to get taxis to Kenilworth. For further information see our website.
Friday 22nd February	Pin, Pie & Pint: Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford—bring your partner for a fun evening!! £5 deposit pp: through Ray Cooke: ray.cooke@hse.gsi.gov.uk

For more details, contact Secretary Allan Duffy on 01564 200 431 or visit our website: www.solihullcamra.org.uk

Many, though not all, of our local pubs are accessible to disabled people. If you would like to come to one of our meetings and would like assistance to get inside, please let us know ahead of time and we will do our best to help.



For complaints about short measures or other beer-related problems, contact Solihull Trading Standards on 0121 704 6844

Is one of these posts for you??

We'd love more people to get more involved within the branch—whether you have joined recently or are a long-standing member, you may be interested in one of our vacant Committee positions: **Young Members Contact**; **Public Affairs & Publicity Officer**, and **Pubs Officer**. If you think one of these posts might interest you, then talk to the Chairman on 0121 603 1621 for an overview of each post's duties.

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Opening hours:

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Friday & Saturday: 11.30am-10.00pm

(Sunday: Closed)

**266 Cranmore Boulevard, Shirley,
Solihull B90 4PX Tel. 0121 744 2827**

Wines, aperitifs, and other alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks also available for your day or evening get-togethers and parties—come in and talk to us about your requirements and we will always be glad to help.



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Perry's Shed

The Shed Brewery Ltd is a family run business based in Hockley Heath, set in the beautiful countryside of historic county Warwickshire. Established in 2011 as a registered brewery, our Head Brewer, Perry Clarke, has been brewing for friends for over thirty years, highlighted by his victory in the 2010 Solihull Beer Festival homebrew competition. However with more and more people wanting the beer, Perry soon realised he had to build a brewery to meet the ever increasing demand.



Thus, The Shed Brewery LTD was formed. The company now brews and sells over a hundred and fifty pints a week!

"We brew to methods common in the 1800's, meaning our beers are absolutely chemical free; unlike that from many breweries, our beer is absolutely suitable for vegetarians" said Perry. "In fact the only ingredients in our beers are water, malt, hops and yeast. While most beers are forced ready in one week, patience is used to mature and clear our beer in keeping with the laid-back Warwickshire nature. This means customers have taken to ordering their beer five weeks in advance to secure their supply".



Brewing is done on a Sunday by Perry and our Assistant Brewer Connor, the bottling and conditioning is done the following Saturday by Harry.

Perry commented "We source only the finest time-honoured ingredients from a small, experienced English maltster and use only high quality Maris Otter malts and hops. We work to our ancestral secret recipes, to produce a pint that encapsulates the ancient flavours of English ale heritage".

"Currently, we produce eight beers in total ranging in strength from 3.4% to 5.6%, so there should be something for everyone and any occasion. We have had recent success in the Shirley Beer festival where our beers were the first to be finished and thanks all those who came along and helped out. If you're interested, in becoming a friend of the Shed Brewery LTD, call us at 07910 004041".



Trip to Bruges

Ever fancied a trip to Bruges, a great place to visit for beer tasting?? Local CAMRA member Steve Evans does; in fact he is so keen to go that he is putting a trip together himself to the 2013 Bruges Beer Festival.



The visit will take place from Saturday 2nd February (an early start: depart Birmingham International airport 6.00am; arrive Brussels and take the train to Bruges; check in at B & B mid-morning; beer festival opens midday) to Monday 4th February. Sunday 3rd February will comprise a return visit to the festival and sight-seeing in Bruges. Monday 4th February: return train to Brussels around midday; fly back during the afternoon; arrive at BHI airport early evening.



At present prices are approximate, but the trip is likely to cost around £225.00 per person for flights, the train journey and B & B accommodation (exact amount will depend on numbers booking and willingness to share rooms).

If you are interested, to make a booking contact Steve on 07962-161263 **no later than 15th December.**

Glass shape affects beer Drinking

The shape of your glass is probably the last thing on your mind when you are down the pub. However, researchers at the University of Bristol believe the shape of beer glasses affects the speed people drink. Their study shows that people drink more quickly out of curved glasses than straight ones, and that curvy glassware makes pacing yourself a much greater challenge.

A group of 159 men and women were filmed drinking either soft drinks or beer as part of the study. The glasses all contained around half a pint of liquid, but some of the glasses were straight while others were very curved. There was no difference in the drinking time for soft drinks. People drinking from both straight and curved glasses finished after around seven minutes.

However, for the beer drinkers there was a large difference between the two groups. While it took around seven minutes for people drinking from a curved glass to polish off their half pint, it took 11 minutes for those drinking from a straight glass. The report said: "Drinking time is slowed by almost 60% when an alcoholic beverage is presented in a straight glass compared with a curved glass."

The researchers thought that curvy glasses made it harder to pace drinking because judging how much was in the glass became more difficult owing to its curved shape. However, the study looked only at the time taken to finish one drink in a laboratory setting. So it is not certain what happens on an evening out if multiple drinks are consumed.



J.D. Wetherspoon

The White Swan and The Assembly Rooms each offer two regular ales and a good selection of guest ales from both regional and UK breweries. Both pubs are pleased to announce consistent 'Cask Marque' and 'Best Bar None' accreditations and last year both received a 4-star accreditation from the Scores on the Door Food Hygiene Standard

The White Swan, 32–34 Station Road, Solihull, B91 3SB

Phone: 0121 711 5180

Opening times:

Sun — Wed: 8.00am — 12.00am

Thurs — Sat: 8.00am — 12.30am

Offering 5 guest ales daily.

A music-free venue screening live Freeview sporting events.

2010 Winner of Solihull Best Bar None Best Town Centre Pub and Overall Winner of 2010 Best Bar None

Now in the 2013 CAMRA Good Beer Guide



The Assembly Rooms, 21 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AD

Phone: 0121 711 6990

Opening times:

Sun — Wed: 7.00am — 1.00am

Thurs — Sat: 7.00am — 2.00am

2 regular ales, 3 guest ales and 5 real ciders on hand-pull. Live sporting events screened weekly; DJ's and dancing Thursday-Saturday.

Having a party? Our upstairs bar with seating for 70 is available for hire and can include music arrangements as well as food and drink, all tailored to your needs: please ask staff for further details.



No need to book for our Walk-In Christmas Menu—1, 2 or 3 courses: your choice!!

Or pre-book for a hassle-free meal on Christmas Day.

(Be a real JD Wetherspoon's fan – join us on Facebook!)



Winning Dorothy Cover Girl Graces Brewery Calendar.



The spirit of Dorothy Goodbody – a much-loved character from Wye Valley Brewery's family of ales - has been brought to life for the brewery's 2013 calendar cover.

Dorothy Goodbody is the brains and beauty behind a delicious range of real ales from Wye Valley Brewery. Legend tells that Dorothy was the daughter of a Herefordshire hop farmer in the 1950's and renowned local belle. Inspired by the Herefordshire countryside, she developed a passion for real ale and created a range of fantastic ale recipes using local hops.

The brewery received over 90 applications from potential Dorothy's, all keen to represent this character in a fabulous 1950's styled photo-shoot assisted by vintage fashion designer Vivien of Holloway. The winning Dorothy was Lucy Dearden, from Folkestone, Kent, who won a fabulous prize package including a professional photo-shoot package at one of Herefordshire's hop-farms, luxurious overnight stay, a beautiful 1950's style dress from Vivien of Holloway, framed photo from the shoot, copies of the calendar and a case of Dorothy Goodbody's ales.

To celebrate the local hops used in Dorothy Goodbody's ales, the backdrop for the photo-shoot was the verdant hop garden at Pridewood Farm. Winner Lucy was joined for the day by runner-up and local girl Hannah Tuffin. The farm's Jack Russell Percival also had his 15 minutes of fame when he posed with Lucy in one of the photos!

The 2013 Wye Valley Brewery calendars are hot off the press, and Dorothy-fans can purchase them amongst other items from the brewery shop or online.

See <http://www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk/shop/memorabilia.html> for further details.



Pin, Pie & Pint night, Friday 22nd February 2013, Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford

This will be a great social night out, and the more the merrier!! so why not bring your partner along too??

Places must be reserved in advance—to book (£5.00 deposit per person), contact Ray Cooke at ray.cooke@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Meet at 7.00pm at the pub bar. Polish up that bowling hand, and we'll see you there!!

A Campaign

of Two Halves



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For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days.

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____
 Forename(s) _____
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

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WYE'S WORDS No. 36



“ MERRY CHRISTMAS ”
AND AN HPA NEW YEAR

HPA is a truly delightful pale ale that gives real-ale lovers a taste that's distinctively different. Carefully made using Celeia and locally grown Target hops, HPA is smooth on the palate and boasts a citrus hop aroma leading to a balanced bitter finish. Join us by raising a glass to the festive season – and to an HPA new year!

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